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LETTERS OF LIEUTENANT JOHN RICHARDSON, 1776.

[Mr. J. Howard Lewis, Swarthmore, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, has in his collection originals of the following letters of Lieutenant John Richardson, of the First Battalion Chester County Associators, Colonel James Moore commanding, addressed to "Mr. John Crozier, Springfield township, Chester County, Penna. To be left at Conestoga Wagon Philadelphia."—ED. PENNA. MAG.]

MOUNT WASHINGTON NEAR YORK

August 25. 1776.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—About 10 days ago I receiv'd which was handed me by Capt Jenkins who brought it from the Lakes in Canada—how it went there I cannot tell—Nothing could afford me more Satisfaction than to receive them frequently—I am glad you receiv'd mine I left for you and Hope you have my papers from Warricks—I have Attempted twice to write but have neglected sending each time till the Contents were no News so shall write but little of that Article—After a March of Four days we arriv'd at York about 3 in ye Afternoon I being the last Company of the Regiment brought the Colours, the Colonel brought the Battalion down to Meet us & we paraded the Streets. I went to long Island the Next day to See Frank Johnson & the Officers of that Battalion who were all hearty the rest of the day I spent with General Mifflin & the Next day set of for this Place at 3 O C in Morning and arriv'd abt. 10. We immediately went to Work & in a short time Completed a Stony fort of 34 Cannons which will require near 2 Thousand men to man and will never be taken I think; in a week's time abt. 130 Ships Arriv'd which Since has almost amounted to 300—we were attack'd by the Pheanix a 40 Gun & the Rose a 28 Gun Ship Commanded Wallace the Noted Cruizer we hu[l]led them repeatedly but the Wind being Fair they passed us Since which we attacked them with 5 Galleys and did Considerable damage but we were

obliged to retreat with loss of several Men Since which sent two fire Sloops up to Graple them One of them Grapled the Pheanix but by Cutting their Cable they got Clear it being Dark the other Grapled a Tender in mistake for the Rose which was soon consum'd the Captain of one the Sloops is lost—We yesterday were Orderd to March Out after going 5 miles were orderd back again & expect to Morrow we shall march for long Island as the Enemy have landed most of their Men, our people have had several Scirmishes Washington intend to have us at the first General Attack—the Militia of your State are some in York some we hear are going home we have upwards of 6000 Men in and Near York Dunsmore & Clinton has arriv'd—they have Hessian Riflemen—Our fortifications are innumerable & should the possess the City they will never Penetrate the Country but cou'd they get footing where we are now they might hem in all York Island as its but a Mile Wide from River to River & Join the Main by a Bridge 2 miles above us so that is of the greatest importance & not to be given up—Doctor Currie is encamped two miles from York I have not seen him yet—My health is a little impaired by our hard living, on Guard Eviry week, & up all Night—we man the lines at 3 O Clock eviry Morning which Keeps my apitite in General verry strong—I long much be with you once more I hope we shall Determine matters soon that I may come I don't know whether I will Continue Another Year in ye Army tho I have not determin'd—let me hear how my Chester Friends are Daddy Cowplands Family Ashbridges Aunt Molly, J Shaw &c & how the Military there go on How Col Davis acts who thought me too young for a Company What state you are in to Defend in case of Attack—The people about here are verry Kind & I have more General acquaintance among Gentry & farmers than any Man in Camp owing to a Relation I found Near here who is in great Esteem & verry Rich but they have gone from home lately—An Army have frequently been call'd a School & properly so, for here are all the Various Characters in life—all I want is a friend which my par-

ticular disposition cannot find here we just received account from York of the Interception of some letters from one Colol Sedgwick to the Regulars he was to have given up a fort call'd Bunker Hill on the first Attack & as most of the water us'd in York is brought from one Spring the Spring was to be poisoned & on Searching his chest the poison & Number of Letters were discovered on which a Court Martial was Called and he is to be Hanged this day being 26 Aug—the Scotch Troops were entitled to settle lands the Rebels had fled from & for Refusing to fight Contrary to their Enlistment which was to defend themselves on the lands given them—Four officers were shott & 3 whole companys whip'd some of the are now in the Sound & we hear'd great firing all day Expect there has been a considerable Engagement.

I am &c

Yours Sincerely

JOHN RICHARDSON

CAMP ON MORRIS'S HEIGHTS YORK ISLAND Sepr 24

DEAR SIR,—Your agreeable letter of the 15 Inst. is just handed me by Major Patton . . . You know my Zeal in the Glorious Cause for which I left the Calm Contented life with all the Sweets & pleasure of the Woods & Fields, my rural Friends, and most Delightful Scenes; for this Embrac'd & Courted Hostile Fields, so foreign to my Nature for this I choose to be where Death and Devastation riots, in hopes to stop her Horrid Steps, or lend a helping hand to save an Injur'd Country After writing my last the regulars landed on a small Island not 50 yards from the main where the Centries of each side discovered each other I was oposite them when a Ship lying there fir'd & drove me of shooting one man in the hip with a Nine pound ball it slightly wounded only. We were preparing Bridges the 13 & 14th of this Inst across Harlem river to the Main that in case of attack there might be assistance to or from York and on the 15th being Sunday the regulars began Canonading in both Rivers when 5 Ships in East River

got as far as Turtle Bay near ye midle of York Island where they attackt a fort we had there, when our people began retreating & imediately about 7 thousand of them landed and at same time a body of them began a landing at York the Sudeness & Surprize set the troops in York imediately to retreating in the greatest Disorder and Confusion when the Enemy Enterd York without further Molestation taking our Waggans and baggage Some Prisoners Amintition Provision Heavy Artillery &c this Joind to our former Bad Fortune was verry discouraging and The Next Day a large body of them with Artillery &c made another Attack on a Body of Troops who imediately began retreating again but the General coming rallied them & some of the officers were horsewhipt others left their Men by themselves who returned to Action and determined on a Stand when the General Sware he would Run thro the Body the first man who ran from his post when they Mett the Enemy in order and after firing a short time both Armies Broke their Order & our people Rushing furiously up the Hill where the Enemy were Posted behind a stone wall with every advantage of Trees Bushes &c Struck them with Terror that they imediately began a flight and our people pursued near a Mile when theyre Catridges being Spent they return'd and got a fresh suply but the Enemy thought proper not to come out their lines this little success has had surprising good effects on the Spirits of the Troops, last Saturday I was in the Jersey to see some of the flying Camp but think they are under no Discipline they were mutinous about pay likewise & the provincials Altee & Miles Batt. have likewise mutinied & most all deserted—last Saturday 3 O'C we Discovered a great fire at New York but cou'd not tell what it mean till we are since informed by Deserters that most of the Town is burn supos'd to be done by our people & we learn by Montreseur who told it to General Putnam on Sunday while he was here with a flag of Truce & Genl putnam since has told to me that During the fire the Caught a Number of our people who they had prisoners & threw them into the Flames & if they

met an American coming out of a house they immediately Cut his throat & several others they tyed up by the Heels & cut them from ear to Ear & yesterday they Caught the Captain of a Company of Rangers & hung him immediately for a Spy & have murdered a great many Women likewise & have taken up allmost eviry person in York & intend to Execute a great Number all this is said to be done by Hessians who have plundered eviry One without Distinction or regard to Whig & Tory—Yesterday a small party attempted a landing on the Main at Morisenia where our people drove them off but they wounded a Colol & Kill'd an Adecamp they attack'd powles Hook fort I could see the firing last Night & this morn but believe they have taken it as firing has Ceas'd—We drum'd out a Captain in Womans Clothing for Cowardice in the Engagement the 16th we broke several officers for plundering—I have just come off a Guard at the lines I was close by the Enemies Centries several times but they did not fire our Guard were 1000 on Picquet we heard them at Work all Night & this morning find they have built a fortification being up all Night I must sleep Shall write again in 2 or 3 days I am my Dr Sr Wishing your Hapiness with Sincerity Yours &c

JOHN RICHARDSON